

Family Style Meal Service

Purpose:

This instruction sets forth the policy concerning the service of family style meal service. Although written for the Child and Adult Care Food Program, schools who administer the Head Start Program, are encouraged to follow the same guidance.

Scope:

Sponsors participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or the School Breakfast Program (SBP).

Description:

The Child and Adult Care Food Program has long been recognized as a means of providing nutritious meals to children and helping them develop good eating habits, which they will - retain in later years. Both of these nutritional goals can be effectively pursued through family style meal service, especially when they are stressed by supervising adults through personal example and assistance to children during the meal.

Unlike cafeteria lines, unitized meals, and pre-set service, the family style method affords some latitude in the size of initial servings because replenishment is immediately available at each table. In addition, even when a complete family style meal service is not possible or practical, it may be useful to offer a component or components in a family style manner, particularly when small children are being served. This latitude must be exercised in compliance, at a minimum, with the following practices:

1. Enough food must be placed on each table to provide minimum portions of the family style components for all children at the table, and to accommodate Program adult(s) supervising meal service at the table if they eat with the children.
2. The family style meal service allows children to make choices in selecting foods and the size of the initial servings. Children should initially be offered the full required portion of each meal component.
3. During the course of the meal, it is the responsibility of the supervising adults to actively encourage each child to accept service of the full required portion for each food component of the meal pattern. For example, if a child initially refuses a food component, or initially does not accept the full required portion of a meal component, the supervising adult should offer the food component to the child again.

4. Institutions which use family style meal service may not claim seconds for reimbursement.

Meals served which follow guidelines laid out in this Instruction are eligible for reimbursement.

SOURCE: FNS INSTRUCTION 783-9 REV.2, DATE MAY 3, 1993, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE.